NAQCC News

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1. CHALLENGE: Our September challenge is something completely new. As everyone knows, at one time the number in a call sign had to match the area of the USA in which the ham resided. If it didn't you had to sign your call with a portable designator such as K3WWP/4 if I operated in VA, NC, etc. It ain't so any longer. For example K3WWP can operate from and/or live anywhere in the USA and legally sign just K3WWP. Well, we want you to see how many different State-number combinations you can work during September. That is, you can work K3xxx, W4xxx, AA7xx, N2xxx all of whom live in Florida and that would be 4 combinations - FL-3, FL-4, FL-7, FL-2. I'm sure you get the idea. There are 50 times 10 possible combinations from AL-1 through WY-0. Have fun! Be sure to report your results to be eligible for winning the bug/paddle handles donated by Gregg WB8LZG as described here:

Continuing this month and next, everyone who completes the challenge and reports their results according to the rules is entered into a drawing to win one of the remaining two sets of the bug or paddle handle pieces donated by Gregg WB8LZG. The winner gets to select which one of the sets he or she needs for their particular bug or paddle. Please let us know when you submit your results if you don't want to be included in the drawing for any reason whatsoever (perhaps you don't own a bug or paddle). Otherwise you will be included, and if you win and then aren't interested, we'll have to go through the effort of a second drawing.

Full Challenge info here including a link to a worksheet example that makes our alphabet challenges a snap.

2. AUGUST SPRINT RESULTS: I think what makes our sprints or any contest or sprint interesting is the different propagation encountered each time. This month, for example, 40M was in longer skip in most every location, and it depended on how far you were from the area that had the most participants how well you did. For example here at K3WWP, I missed out on

working most stations in the Northeast USA, and instead was working stations from CO, TX, MN, GA, AL, etc. Since there were not as many participants from those areas, my score was down somewhat this month. 80M was decent with about 6 times as many QSO's as last month, but did have its usual QRN. Participation overall was up from July, and up a lot from several months ago according to Art K6XT who said that participation was really up from the last time he participated in a sprint and said that the club is really progressing nicely. We came just a handful of logs short of a record as shown in the stats below which we'll get to without further ado.

Well, in a moment anyway. Just a reminder first that you should be using the latest updated version of GenLog and after the contest be sure to use the 'Log' menu to write your log file. That's the one to submit - the file that has ONLY your call in the file name as for example K3WWP.log, VA3RJ.log, AA4W.log. Most of you are doing it correctly now, and that is greatly appreciated as it simplifies the cross-checking process immensely Thank you.

STATS - current month, previous month, all time record, mo/yr (blue indicates a record set this month):

	Jul	Jun	Rec	Month
Logs -	58	50	62	4/08
Stns in logs -	93	86	110	5/08
Hour 1 QSO's -	379	288	500	4/08
Hour 2 QSO's -	375	241	449	3/08
Total QSO's -	754	529	898	4/08
20M QSO's -	127	150	185	6/08
40M QSO's -	512	361	602	4/08
80M QSO's -	115	18	481	12/07
Autologger logs -	53	44	54	4/08

WINNERS:

1st SWA East - KA8MPT
1st SWA Central - W5TM
1st SWA Mountain - W0JFR
1st SWA Pacific - KI6OFN
1st Gain - K4BAI

Special Award Drawing Entrants (vintage straight key):
N8XMS, NU7T
Drawing Winner: N8XMS

CW Books on CD Drawing Entrants (donated by Chuck Adams K7QO):
N8XMS, KD0V, KI6OFN, K6XT
Drawing Winner: KD0V

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because that shows the ham radio world that there are many folks still using and enjoying CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Your reports are important also.

We had 6 stations who didn't submit a log show up 5 or more times in the 58 logs we received

and cross-checked. Hopefully those 6 and many others will be back next month AND submit a log.

We welcome these hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:
VE3OBU, K2JT, VE3ILE, VA2SG, N2ATB, W5EPW, NI0R, K4UFT, KB3ROI

Periodically we like to honor those who have participated in the most sprints, and here we go with the top 10:
K3WWP - all 46
KA2KGP - 39
KB3LFC/WY3H - 31
W2LJ - 30
K4NVJ -29
KD2MX - 28
W2SH - 28
W2JEK - 27
K4BAI - 26
W9CC - 26

Full sprint info here.

3. AWARD WINNERS THE PAST TWO MONTHS:

KD0V - 1000MPW #0040
N3ZL - 1000MPW #0041

Hopefully interest in our awards and the resulting award applications will pick up as we get out of the summer doldrums and as conditions improve when the new sunspot cycle eventually kicks in which should be very soon now.

Full List of all award winners here.

4. OPERATING TIPS:

Until our NAQCC Elmer program is put into effect by Ron K5DUZ and Karl N3IJR, we are going to offer an operating tip in each newsletter to try to address the needs of our members who are new to operating CW.

I hear one way or another from many hams who say how difficult it is to make QSO's using QRP, even with such an efficient mode as CW. I have not found that to be true in my case as I've made QRP CW QSO's with simple mostly-indoor wire antennas on each of the past 5,136 days as of the date (8/26/08) of writing this. Perhaps just a few basic tips will help others achieve those same results.

1. Be patient - not every CQ you call is going to net an immediate answer and not every CQ you answer is going to get you a QSO. Too many hams call CQ a few times and give up. Others call 2 or 3 stations with no response and give up. You have to be persistent.

2. Keep your CQ's short with frequent pauses to listen. Keep the pauses short too. You want to keep an RF presence on the frequency and yet pause regularly to listen for answers. I've

found the best pattern to be CQ CQ CQ DE K3WWP K3WWP K, then listen for 5 seconds or so and repeat the cycle over and over again till you get an answer or give up. I've called for as long as 35-45 minutes now and then till I got an answer. Use an automatic keyer to call CQ and you can spend the time working in the shack till you get an answer so you won't feel you're wasting time.

3. Only call stations with strong signals unless you know they are also QRP. A weak signal from a 100 watts or higher station means propagation is not that good between you and him and he probably won't hear your QRP signal at all.

4. Learn how to zero beat and always zero beat a station (exceptions in a future newsletter) when you answer someone so you are exactly on the same frequency as they are. Many folks are very poor at zero beating these days and may answer a CQ several hundred Hz off frequency which is outside the bandpass of many narrow filters. So conversely when you call CQ, be sure to use your rig's RIT to tune up and down several hundred Hz when listening for responses.

5. Hang out around (but not directly on) the standard QRP frequencies. Folks tend to answer weaker signals there for whatever reason.

6. Be sure you're keying is as near perfect as possible. It is MUCH easier to copy a weak station sending perfect CW than one sending sloppy code.

7. Obviously make sure your antenna system is working properly and matched as close as possible to your transmitter. Don't be overly nit-picking about it though. There's not much difference between an SWR of 1:1 and 1.5:1. Instead of wasting time trying for that perfect 1:1 match, get on the air and get those QSO's.

8. Get somewhat of a decent understanding of propagation on the different bands so you aren't trying to make QSO's under impossible conditions. It's pretty useless calling CQ on 160 or 80 at noon, for example. Likewise, except perhaps near sunspot maximums, calling CQ on 10M at midnight.

I think if you follow those tips, you'll find yourself using more and more logbook pages to fill in all the QSO's you'll be making.

Of course don't forget to submit a news item to the newsletter telling the rest of the club members how well you're doing to encourage them to do the same. The more that folks know other folks are having success, the more success they will in turn have themselves, and it will just multiply from there and the bands will be alive with signals again. Well, maybe that's dreaming a bit, but who knows?

We'll have more tips to help you improve your operating skills in each newsletter until Ron and Karl get the Elmer section started on the web site. Then we'll just refer you there for the great tips they will have. YOU can help US by letting us know what you would like to see discussed here. Just email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. Thanks.

5. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- Our recruitment drive this month netted us almost 200 new members thanks to the efforts of Paul KD2MX who wrote the recruitment email and Dave VA3RJ who distibuted it to many CW/QRP related sources. It's sad to know there are so many QRP/CW ops out there who just

don't know about our club but delightful how eager they are to join and help us in our efforts to promote and protect CW usage once they are informed about the club. I think it is very important that you make it a point to mention the NAQCC whenever you work a CW op who expresses an interest in QRP, either during the QSO or in a follow-up email. In conjunction with that, remember Tom WY3H is working on a recruitment award with a nice prize to the one who recruits the most new members. That has been put on hold for a bit while Tom deals with some other issues, but it will be coming.

- Continuing on the recruitment theme. I think it may be helpful to review here a couple of the top ways new members say they found out about the club. Then you'll know to which sources you can aim any recruiting efforts. For example QRP-L nets a lot of new members, so whenever you post anything there, be sure to mention the NAQCC in some way, perhaps just simply mentioning your club number will prompt some curiosity and lead to a new member or two.

Currently here are the top three referral sources from when we started keeping track some time ago:
1. Keynote/FISTS - 46
2. QRP-L - 45
3. WorldRadio - 28
There are many other sources as well. Just to mention a couple, the Elecraft reflector and web site not surprisingly have done well, and one that is a surprise to me, but not really, is the Radio Modifications reflector. QRPers love building and modifying gear.

- I know that those of you who were fortunate enough to win the beautiful hand made bug/paddle handles really appreciate them and are proud to own them. We still have two sets to give away, and we'll be doing that in future challenges. However that little prelude is just an introduction to this great news.

Gregg is now making custom knobs for the K1 and K2 Elecraft rigs. They are every bit as beautiful as the handles as you can see from the picture below. Gregg is donating 3 K1 knobs and 3 K2 knobs for us to giveaway. We have yet to decide how we are going to handle the giveaway, but probably it will be in conjunction with our club awards program. Details in the next newsletter.

- As we mentioned a couple newsletters ago,we've come up with a new fun award suggested by George KN2GSJ. It involves working stations whose call letters suffix forms a word as in W3DOG, K9ART, W9TO, and the like. So far, it looks like I'm (K3WWP) the only one who qualifies for the award, but as I said, I'm holding off applying for it as I'd like one of you, perhaps George himself to be the award certificate #0001 winner. So check it out in the awards section of the web site and go for it.

Since response to this award is so slow, we're going to hold off a bit longer on offering a couple other awards suggested by Gary K1YAN. Perhaps with the expected pick up of activity on the bands in the fall and winter and the soon to be improving propagation conditions, interest in our awards will increase. Hopefully so, as we'd like a lot of you to proudly display our handsome certificates in your shack to show your visitors just how efficient CW and QRP can be.

- We've had some response from those who are interested in being a N3A operator in October, but we still need more ops, and we'll continue to 'nag' until we get some more. How about those of you who operated N3A last year? Wouldn't you like to do so again this year? You all said you had a great time then. C'mon, let's hear from you. If you didn't operate last year, but would like to have a fun, interesting, and learning experience this year, being an N3A op fits that description exactly. You don't have to be a CW 'pro' by any means. You don't have to put in a certain minimum number of hours - perhaps you'd just like to do it for a couple hours on one day. That's fine. You don't have to adhere to any specific time or band schedule. It's up to you with one condition. You do have to work together with any other ops from your call area to avoid having more than one station from your call area on the air at the same time. I don't know what more I can say to encourage you. Just email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** and say you're interested, then later we'll work out all the details. See the special N3A section below for more details.

- We are pleased to welcome a new newsletter emailer. Don N9GOD is the kind of member we enjoy having in our club. He immediately responded to our plea in the last newsletter for someone to help out. Don immediately then learned the system with a couple test emailings and he will be distributing this newsletter and future newsletters (or the email version of them actually) to our member numbers 2501 and above. Thanks Don, we appreciate you very much.

- I can't say too much about it yet, but we're working with FISTS to have them share in our October anniversary celebration. Hopefully it will all come together and we can announce details soon.

- We had an inquiry/request from one member about our stationery. He asked if he could add his call, name, and NAQCC number at the top near the general NAQCC info. Sure, the stationery comes in two sections, a .jpg and and .xml file. Just edit the .jpg file in any good picture editor like Paint.NET for example. If you add any info below what is there already, you may then have to adjust the .xml file to move the text insertion point down a bit so the text doesn't appear on top of what you added to the picture. I know that sounds a bit technical to those of you who don't fool with such things, but I'll be glad to help out if you ask. Remember you can get our NAQCC email stationery by simply requesting it. We'd love to have as many of you as possible use it to promote the club and in turn our efforts to help promote CW usage. It's an excellent recruitment tool when you use it to send email to a non-member who may not know about the club.

- There was a lot of 'news' this month. Here's one last item. Two of our club features are being way underused. If you want to communicate with other club members to pass along some hot tip about QRP and/or CW, how can you do it? Use the guestbook. There is only about one posting per month there now. If everyone gets in the habit of not only posting items there and checking it regularly, it becomes an effective communications adjunct to communicating with CW on the air. We think CW should be the prime means of communication, but if you want to reach a 'whole bunch' of members with some info, the guestbook is the way to go. Another way is to use the member news section of this newsletter. Just send your info to Paul as described below and your info will be distributed to all who read the newsletter. Basically any info that should be distributed as soon as possible goes in the guestbook, and the not so urgent, but nevertheless interesting info can go in the newsletter.

5a. N3A OPERATION FOR OCTOBER 2008:

- The volunteers are starting to sign up for our special event in the month of October. So far we have the following ops listed by call area interested in operating N3A during October:

N3A/1 - W1OH (MA), K1YAN (MA)
N3A/2 -
N3A/3 - WY3H (PA), K3WWP (PA), AF3Z (PA), AE3J (DE), KC2EGL (PA)
N3A/4 - K4UK (VA), KB4QQJ (NC)
N3A/5 -
N3A/6 -
N3A/7 - KH6OZ (MT)
N3A/8 - WB8LZG (MI)
N3A/9 - K9JWI (IN), AI4AW (WI)
N3A/0 - AB0TX (KS)

That's a good start, but as you see, we still need ops from the W2, W5, and W6 areas, ironically perhaps the three call areas with the most NAQCC members. We want to have all 10 call areas active just as we did last year when our N3A operation totalled around 1,200 QSO's.

Hopefully all of our 16 ops from last year will sign up to do it again this year since they all did so well in 2007, but so far only a couple have done so.

Reiterating, all that needs to be done is for you to operate as you normally do, but use the N3A callsign instead of your regular call. I guarantee you'll have a lot of fun and also do a lot to promote the club, CW, and QRP. You don't have to be a super fast CW hotshot to operate by any means. Nor do you have to have a big antenna farm, etc. The special event is designed to show what can be done by operators at every skill level from the grizzled veteran to the rank beginner using CW and QRP. Last year some of our ops said that by operating N3A, their confidence and abilities increased and made them (even) better ops.

Does that whet your appetite? Want to give it a shot and have fun? I'm certainly looking forward to my operation here. Just express your interest by emailing **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. Thank you.

QSL's for the event can be handled either by you or the club. It's your choice. If you wish to do your own QSLing, we'll provide the custom designed QSL's for you to send out.

Any questions? Let us know, and we'll give you a quick answer. We'll have more info in the newsletters as time goes on.

6. MEMBER NEWS: We all want to hear about your exploits using CW and QRP, and this is the place to post that info. So send the info to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET** so he can convert it into a news item like those here.

- **From Ron K5DUZ #0005 -** Ron recently sent along this link to an interesting video from the BBC on CW in the UK: BBC CW Video.

- **From Hal WB4AEG #1219 -** This QRP-specific spot site is very inactive. It can be a great service to our community. Lets see if we QRPers can get some activity going here while increasing our QRP QSO success rate. QRP Spots

- **From Ted K4UFT #2395 -** A couple of weeks ago I was working the North American QSO Party (CW) on Saturday evening. I'm not a big-time contester, but 15 Meters was open so I was making some good CW contacts with my IC-706MKIIg at about 30 Watts to a 15 Meter dipole fed with 300 Ohm twin-lead up about 12 feet.

After a couple of hours a pretty hefty rainstorm came up so I pulled the plug on everything. A couple of lightning pops hit close by and the power went out after a transformer a few blocks away was smoked. I called the power company and they said it would be 4-6 hours before power was restored, so we lit some candles.

About an hour or so later the storm passed. I got my FT-817 and its 7.5 AH SLA battery and hooked it up to the antenna. The total lack of man-made noise on all of the bands was unbelievable!!! 15 Meters was still open so I tuned up there. My battery wasn't charged all that well and the voltage sagged when the '817 was keyed at 5 Watts and also at 2.5 Watts. 1 Watt was okay so just for the heck of it I tried answering a call. I was blown away when a W0 in Colorado came back giving me a 559. All in all I worked 14 stations in the course of about an hour with 1 Watt. Obviously, it was band conditions and a resonant dipole that did the trick. Over the years I've worked a lot with 5 Watts, but never with 1 Watt.

All good things have to come to an end. The power came back on and with it all of the garbage from neighborhood computers, TVs, the cable system, etc. returned to plague me once more. 15 Meters had gone away by then so I went QRT.

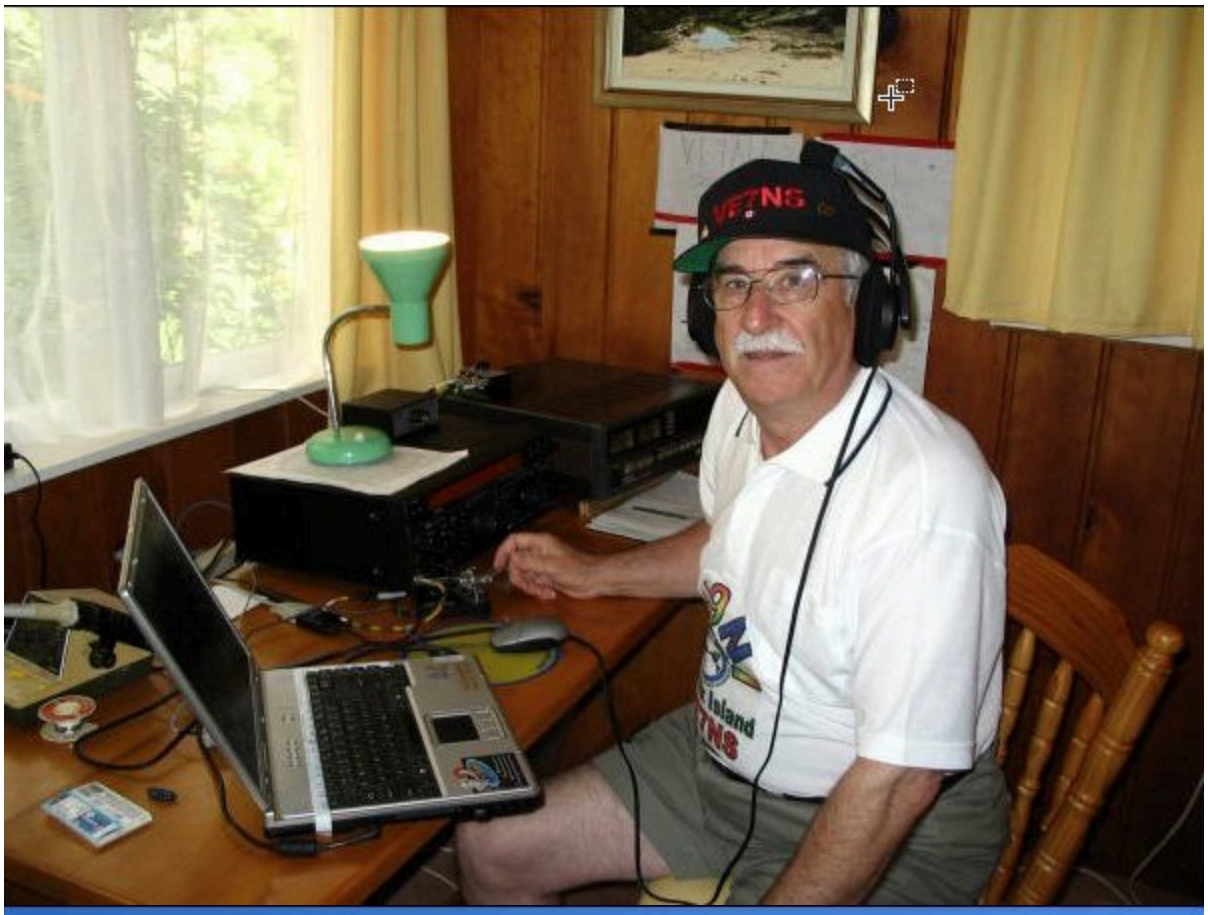
I'm really looking forward to Cycle 24 when the upper bands come to life again and I will try 1 Watt more often.

From John K3WWP #0002 - I just have to comment on Ted's news item above. There's no need to wait for Cycle 24 to run 1 watt. It works just great now. In case you don't remember I worked 0.93 watts back in our milliwatt challenge month of May and made 158 QSO's on 40 and 80 meters including QSO's with all the western W7 states. QRP or QRPp works at all stages of a sunspot cycle from maximum down to minimum. Obviously it works better at a sunspot cycle maximum, but the minimums aren't bad either.

And don't forget those high bands are open more often than most folks think during a minimum. It's more propagANDA, not propagATION that makes the high bands sound dead. Everyone believes the propaganda that the high bands are only useful during a sunspot maximum so no one even bothers to try using them at other times. Well.... except for the devoted contesters who know that and do 'bring the high bands alive' during big contests, be it at a maximum, minimum, or in-between. The recent NAQP is a good example. 10 and 15 were just absolutely alive during that contest as Ted also mentioned.

From Ron VE7NS #2548 - I am attaching a couple of .jpg formatted photographs taken of myself during a DXpedition to Norfolk Island in June, 2006 operating as VI9NI as part of the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the landing of the descendants of the HMS Bounty mutineers from Pitcairn Island. Possibly they will be of interest to some of the members of the

NAQCC.



PS: See also QRZ.COM and the "Station Tour" of my station courtesy of the BC DX Club web

site. 73 de Ron VE7NS

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.